

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-07

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3679

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 3815

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, KU, FR, UK, UR

SUBJ: KUWAITI ARMS PURCHASES

SUMMARY: LOCAL BRITISH EMBASSY HAS PROVIDED SOME INSIGHTS INTO CURRENT STATUS KUWAITI ARMS PURCHASES INDICATING TANK NEGOTIATIONS WITH UK AGAIN STALLED, GOK SEEKING ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS AND MISSILES FROM USSR AND FIRST FRENCH-BUILT MIRAGE FIGHTERS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE KUWAIT IN EARLY 1976.

1. IN TOUR D'HORIZON WITH DCM SEPTEMBER 17 BRITISH CHARGE MADE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS CONCERNING KUWAITI ARMS PURCHASES.

2. GOK AND HMG HAD REACHED AGREEMENT ABOUT TWO MONTHS AGO ON CHIEFTAIN TANK PURCHASE (HMG HAD AGREED PRICE ESCALATION WOULD NOT EXCEED 40 PERCENT), CONTINGENT ON REACHING DEFINITIVE AGREEMENT ON ASSOCIATED AMMUNITION PURCHASES. HMG IS UNWILLING TO LIMIT ESCALATION ON AMMUNITION COSTS WHILE GOK IS CONTINUING TO INSIST PRICE NOT EXCEED 40 PERCENT AGREED IN TANK PACKAGE. CHARGE NOT SANGUINE THAT OVER-ALL AGREEMENT

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WILL BE REACHED PRIOR SEPTEMBER 30 WHEN PRESENT OFFER

EXPIRES. ANY NEW BRITISH OFFER UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BE UP TEN PERCENT OVER PRESENT OFFER.

3. HMG HAD OBTAINED THROUGH INTELLIGENCE CHANNELS SHOPPING LIST INDICATING MILITARY HARDWARE PURCHASES BEING DISCUSSED BETWEEN GOK AND USSR. (IT NOT CLEAR WHETHER LIST WAS OF KUWAITI OR SOVIET ORIGIN - A COPY IS BEING SUPPLIED USG THROUGH BRITISH EMBASSY WASHINGTON.) CHARGE SAID HE HAD SEEN LIST BUT WAS NOT EXPERT ENOUGH TO INTERPRET. LIST SUGGESTED PRINCIPAL ITEMS OF INTEREST WERE ADVANCED USSR ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS AND RELATIVELY SHORT-RANGE GROUND-TO-AIR MISSILES "TO FILL IN GAPS NOT COVERED BY IHAWK BEING SUPPLIED BY AMERICANS." (WE PRESUME GUN IS ZSU-23 AND MISSILE SA-7).

4. LOCAL BRITISH EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM FRENCH SOURCE THAT GOK/USSR TALKS WERE CONTINUING AND ARE SERIOUS. SAME SOURCE SAID THAT GOK TEAM ALSO NEGOTIATING WITH USSR OFFICIALS ON BEHALF SYRIAN GOVERNMENT, ALLEGEDLY BECAUSE GOK RELUCTANT TO CONTINUE PAYING SYRIAN BILLS WITHOUT SOME OVERSIGHT OF COSTS INVOLVED.

5. FINALLY, FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICIAL HAD ADVISED FIRST MIRAGE FIGHTERS PURCHASED BY KUWAIT WOULD ARRIVE IN EARLY 1976. KUWAITI PILOTS WOULD MOSTLY BE TRAINED IN FRANCE. NO COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORT PACKAGE HAD BEEN DEVELOPED. GOF WOULD SUPPLY PARTS AND "CIVILIAN" TECHNICIANS FROM TIME-TO-TIME ON AN AS NEEDED BASIS. LOCAL FRENCH EMBASSY APPREHENSIVE CONCERNING PRACTICALITY OF PROPOSED SUPPORT SCHEME. STOLTZFUS

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